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[redacted] 3270-63
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MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Director, OSA
: Deputy Assistant Director, OSA

SUBJECT : Surfacing of OXCART-Type Vehicle

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1. The other day at lunch [redacted] mentioned the potential security problems with the advent of the supersonic transport and added interest in the type of vehicle and power plant which will be employed. He also made reference to an article in a Hartford paper which alluded to the fact that the J-58 engine had been developed some five years ago and since that time its use and production have been held under tight security wraps. As our discussion evolved, it became apparent that some time in the not too distant future we will have to face up to a "surfacing" either by design or by accident of an OXCART-type vehicle, be it the A-12 itself, the LRI, or the R-12. In view of the tense and rather emotional controversy now existing in Congress, DOD, and the U.S. public over the TFX and the B-70, any accidental surfacing of an OXCART vehicle at this time would be most inopportune. Additionally, whatever explanation may be proffered will receive the utmost scrutiny of all interested parties. Such scrutiny will demand upon our part that whatever story or explanation that might be set forth be a pure statement of the fundamental truth and, although it may not be all revealing, initially in itself it must be based on fact and can eventually lead to all facts.

2. If we can assume then that a surfacing will take place in one form or another and if we can assume that such surfacing must have some form of substantial validity, we now should consider whether it is best to wait for an accidental surfacing thereby putting ourselves on the defensive to explain how it all came about or whether it is best that we "take the bull by the horns" and surface a story suitable to us under conditions and atmosphere of our own choosing. Joe and I both agree, if I can take the liberty of his endorsement, that the latter is far more preferable and that any surfacing should possess the characteristics of leading to the unfolding of the whole and complete truth.

Handle via [redacted]
Control System

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3. If we look at the reasons which prompted the security envelope which shrouded the OXCART program, we find that the primary reason was to develop this aircraft in secrecy which would permit us to get the jump on any defenses which the Russians or other hostile countries might develop to counter this capability. Once the OXCART vehicle, however, is employed in an actual operation, and probably sooner if it is surfaced by accident, the characteristics and capabilities of that aircraft can be readily deduced by our foes. As it now stands, it is doubtful that the OXCART vehicle will be able to penetrate the Soviet Union without radar detection. Such radar detection should immediately betray the altitude and speed characteristics of the bird. Hence, in effect, the first overflight will achieve the same compromise as a controlled surfacing prior to such overflight.

4. It is suggested then that since we are rapidly approaching the operational date of the OXCART vehicle, that we consider at this time surfacing the LRI as an outgrowth of the OXCART program which was commenced by CIA in 1959 to provide a follow-on to the U-2. The story could also relate that since the basic OXCART vehicle had the potential of a multi-purpose aircraft that other uses of this vehicle were developed and from it came the LRI and the R-12 which is under production. Although it is not necessary, the story could allude to the cancellation of the CIA program and that with security wraps now lifted, the Air Force can surface the LRI, etc.

5. It is also suggested that there will be a fundamental reservation amongst us in the Intelligence Community to entertain the prospect of such a surfacing. Failure to face reality will also tempt us to postpone such a surfacing in hopes that delay will permit happier times in the future. I venture to say that such tenets are wishful desires and there will always be some reason, political or otherwise, in the future which might encourage further delay of this proposed surfacing. We should not dismiss the frightful fact of the increasing numbers of people which are becoming exposed to the OXCART-type vehicle, either through OXCART itself or KEDLOCK, [] and now TAGBOARD. Mounting press speculation on the intentions and activities of Kelly Johnson should also prompt us to weigh seriously surfacing the LRI at this time.

6. I am sure there are refinements and variations which can be made to this basic suggestion; however, I feel that it is imperative that any story or surfacing start with the basic truth of CIA's involvement. To do otherwise, we will never be able to explain the secret

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funding or contracting and will merely let ourselves open to the questions and criticisms of Congress, press, and public who could readily shoot holes in any story that is less than candid.

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